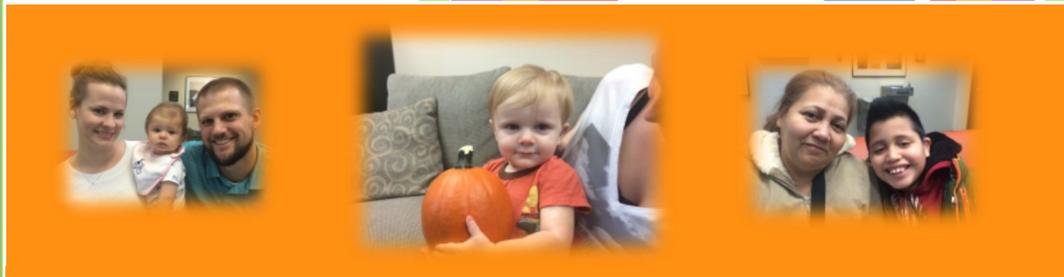


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**Volume 2**  
**Issue 3**  
**FALL**  
**2017**



# CONNECTIONS

A publication of the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

***The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education Mission:  
To promote positive outcomes for all deaf and hard of hearing children in Indiana  
through information, services, and education.***

## From the Director

Christine Moody



At each Advisory Committee meeting, I like to lead a “convening” activity. The Center’s Advisory Committee consists of parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, clinical professionals, early intervention professionals, educational professionals, community members and state agencies. The picture included here shows the result of each person’s contribution to the activity at our last meeting – concrete. Mortar is a workable paste used to bind building blocks such as bricks together and used to fill and seal the irregular gaps between them.

Mortar becomes hard when it cures, resulting in a rigid, aggregate structure. So, bricks plus mortar plus time equals a solid foundation. In a similar way, our “mortar” is the relationships we develop to bind our entities together and to solve and repair any issues between them.

Our relationships become solid over time, resulting in a strong, connected system. So, stakeholders (bricks) plus relationships (mortar) plus time equals a solid system (concrete). Our relationships are the mortar of our systems serving deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. If you would like to be a part of our Advisory Committee to develop relationships and a strong system, please contact me. As a legislated, statewide entity and a Department of Education, Indiana Resource Network (IRN), the Center values the relationships we have with other stakeholders around the state. This is especially evident as we continue to open and add staff to regional centers in other areas of the state.

Within the Center, we also work to build strong, collaborative, seamless relationships as we bring on new, highly qualified staff who are highlighted in this newsletter. We want the process to be smooth, not frustrating, for families and children as they move through different stages on their journey to seek services from early intervention, audiology, assessment and deaf education. Using their specialized education, expertise and experience, our staff works closely with professionals outside the Center to help build capacity around the state and share evidence-based, best practices for this unique population of deaf and hard of hearing children. It’s all about relationships and working together.

# Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

## Regional Centers

Bethany Colson, Deputy Director

As you read through the Center's newsletter this quarter, we hope you can feel our excitement as we announce new staff members and the expansion of our services to regions outside of the greater Indianapolis area.

When the original group of stakeholders met to discuss ideas for the Center in 2012, determining and implementing a plan for regional centers was one of the top priorities identified for the Center. A regional presence is a way for us to reach all children who are deaf and hard of hearing, their families and professionals who serve them. It is our privilege to come alongside families and professionals to support their needs through resources, training and support.

### Southeast Regional Center: Scottsburg



We are pleased to announce that we have a second regional center in place; our Southeast Regional Center is located in Scottsburg. We recently hired an audiologist for this region; **Rachel Mehringer** will be working in this region and is currently helping to set up our audiology suite in this new regional space. More information will be coming on this regional center and audiology services.

### Northeast Regional Center: Fort Wayne



With the recent hire of another audiologist, our northeast regional office is now fully staffed! Mary Zuercher, our regional educational consultant in the northeast region, has been with us since September 2015. She has made great strides in connecting families and professionals to the Center and one another. Mary's work includes professional development activities, mentoring, school support and services, early intervention services and much more. **Amanda Hager** joined her in the northeast region in June as the northeast regional audiologist. Much like the educational consultant role, Amanda will provide a mix of individual services, outreach activities and support to families and professionals.

In times of growth and excitement, it is helpful to reflect on our purpose. The Center was created with the idea of a more seamless system for children who are deaf and hard of hearing and their families throughout the state of Indiana. Opening our regional centers is one way we are able to make this desire a reality.



# SOUND ADVICE

## Audiology



### We've Grown!

Michelle Wagner-Escobar, Audiology Coordinator

The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education is proud to announce and welcome two new audiologists to our growing Audiology Team! Amanda Hager and Rachel Mehringer will be located at our new Northeast and Southeast Regional Centers, respectively. With these additions, we will be able to expand the provision of audiology services, resources and support to Indiana children, families and professionals in these areas of the state. We are fortunate and excited to welcome these new members to our team and look forward to working with even more families and professionals throughout the state.



**Amanda Hager** is our new audiologist for the **Northeast Regional Center** located in Ft. Wayne and is thrilled to be a part of the team! She received both her B.A. in Speech and Hearing Sciences and her Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) from The Ohio State University. She completed her clinical externship at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio as well as a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) traineeship with The Nisonger Center at OSU. Her professional interests include working with underserved populations, policy and advocacy, and public health. Amanda was compelled to join the Center's team because of its commitment to serving children who are deaf and hard of hearing in Indiana regardless of geographic location or socioeconomic status. She was inspired by the Center's commitment to family-centered care by honoring the values and decisions of families. She is looking forward to working with a diverse group of professionals in the field to improve outcomes!



**Rachel Mehringer** is the new audiologist for the **Southeast Regional Center** located in Scottsburg. She grew up in the small town of Jasper, which is located in southwest Indiana. She received her B.A. in Speech and Hearing Sciences and Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) from Indiana University, and following Rachel's studies at IU, she completed her clinical externship at the University of Miami, Mailman Center for Child Development. As an extern at the Mailman Center, Rachel received additional training as a part of their Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program and served as a liaison between her LEND program and Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). She loved getting the opportunity to work with children with various disabilities, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures. Rachel is a born and raised Hoosier and is thrilled to be back in Indiana serving Hoosier families in the SE regional office. She is immensely impressed with the Center's dedication to providing collaborative multidisciplinary assessments to deaf and hard of hearing students and is overjoyed to be a part of the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education team!

**EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY!**

**haapi** hearing aid assistance program of indiana  
 administered by **heap** Indiana



**NO INCOME RESTRICTIONS**

## FAQ

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** What do HAAPI funds cover?  
**A:** HAAPI funds may cover one or two hearing aids depending on what is most appropriate for the hearing loss, one earmold per hearing aid, a pediatric care kit (e.g., battery tester, listening stethoscope, air blower, dry aid kit) and the initial fitting fee.

**Q:** How much will I have to pay for my child's hearing aids?  
**A:** There is no cost for traditional hearing aids.

**Q:** Can I stay with my child's current audiologist?  
**A:** To receive assistance from HAAPI, you must work with a participating HAAPI audiologist. A complete list of providers is available at HAAPIndiana.org. If your child's audiologist is not currently participating in HAAPI, you may either choose another participating audiologist from the list, or you can ask your current audiologist to become a registered audiologist at no cost. The application to become a participating audiologist can be found on our website.

**Q:** What types of hearing aids does HAAPI provide?  
**A:** Participating audiologist can select from more than 40 models from several prominent manufacturers.

**Q:** Does HAAPI cover bone-anchored hearing aids? (e.g., BAHHA, Ponto)  
**A:** HAAPI covers a portion of the cost for these special devices. Please discuss the details with the HAAPI administrative staff and your participating audiologist.

For more information and to apply online visit:  
**HAAPIndiana.org**

Or contact us at:  
 Hearing Aid Assistance Program of Indiana  
 Attention: Hear Indiana  
 4740 Kingsway Drive Suite 33  
 Indianapolis, IN 46205

Phone: 317-828-0211  
 Fax: 888-887-0932  
 Email: [Info@HAAPIndiana.org](mailto:Info@HAAPIndiana.org)




Photography Credits: Kaleigh Calisto, Hear Indiana ©2016.



## Children with hearing loss are eligible for HAAPI, if all of the following are true:



they are at least 3 years old.



a physician has provided medical clearance.



they have not graduated from high school.



they have not received funding from HAAPI in the previous three years.





# BRAIN BUILDERS' CORNER

## Early Intervention

### Factors Influencing Early Brain Development

Cindy Lawrence, Early Intervention and Transition Coordinator

Parents and caregivers who provide loving, nurturing caregiving provide babies with an ideal environment for learning new connections and stimulate language development, signed and/or spoken. This is so important during this time of rapid brain growth. The critical age for learning language is considered to be in the first five years of life. Let's address how that critical time can help prepare children for school and lead to academic readiness.

Factors that influence early brain development include genetics, food and nutrition, responsiveness of parents and caregivers, everyday experiences, physical activity and love. While most of the brain's cells are formed at birth, the outside world shapes the development through experiences that create connections along the synapses occurring between neurons. Those early experiences wire those circuits of the brain that facilitate learning.



Learning occurs throughout our life; however, there are critical times in life when the brain is absorbing new information more readily than other times. The critical window for learning to see and hear is from birth to 4 or 5 years of age. The critical age for language development is from birth to 5 years of age.

For more information about language acquisition and critical age, see [https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/linguistics/learn.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/linguistics/learn.jsp).

(continued on page 6)



# BRAIN BUILDERS' CORNER

## Early Intervention

(Continued from p. 5)

The Center's Early Intervention team is working hard to make sure all of the early interventionists working with deaf and hard of hearing children have access to resources including the latest research in how to help parents and caregivers develop their children's brains during the critical period of language development.

Our CDHHE Network, a partnership between the Center and St. Joseph's Institute for the Deaf, includes professionals who provide services to any family with an identified deaf or hard of hearing child in Indiana working through First Steps.

Preparation for success in school begins at birth with good nutrition, varied and positive experiences, reading, talking and/or signing and singing provided by loving parents and caregivers. Families can access [Bloom Bright](#), a free, family-focused texting program that delivers encouraging, research-backed messages to parents of young children. Participating families receive regular ideas for supporting early learning at home and fostering positive relationships with childcare providers and educators. Parents can text "BLOOM" to 95577 to sign up. If you work with families of young children, please share this free program with them.

The Center's early intervention team is pictured below discussing successes and strategies for meeting the needs of all families referred to our Network. Members of our team shown in this photo include our newest Early Intervention Specialist **Laura Burklew**, Meg Warnock, Kjari Newell, Michelle Coleman and Linda Evans. Angela Moody, also pictured, was our interpreter for the day.



If you know of a family in need of specialized early intervention services available through the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Network contact us at 1-855-875-5193 or email [cdhhenetwork@isdh.in.gov](mailto:cdhhenetwork@isdh.in.gov).



# TACKLIN' Assessment

## Therapists Actively Consulting & Knowledgeably Leading IN

### The Assessment Team: Experts in the Field

The Assessment Team at the state-legislated Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education includes language specialists (spoken and visual), audiologists, school psychologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing. The benefit of taking advantage of the no-cost assessment services at the Center is the comprehensive expertise of the entire Assessment Team. Assessments are available at our Indianapolis, Northeast and Southeast locations, or we can travel to the child's school to conduct the testing.

All of these assessment professionals have numerous years of experience working specifically with students who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as students who also present with additional challenges or diagnoses. This allows us to make the most appropriate and professionally sound recommendations, identifying even the slightest learning gaps, based on valid and reliable interpretations of raw test results and observations. We use a whole-student approach that includes social developmental history, mode of communication, access, expressive and receptive language skills, metalinguistics, reasoning and processing abilities, executive functioning, academic development, behavior, sensory needs, motor planning and other important factors.

The Assessment Team produces comprehensive, integrated reports that include recommendations and suggestions for both the educational and home environments to target the individual needs of the students referred to us. If students are given appropriate supports and services, they should be able to demonstrate annual progress as indicated by their performance on standardized testing. It is critical not to assume the *good enough* approach when interpreting the testing results, such as overall scores that may be considered within average limits. *"It is often the case that deaf and hard of hearing children are found to be 'within the range of typically developing children' when they are young but fall precipitously behind after reaching school age. One can only assume that current assessments are not sufficiently sensitive to adequately identify gaps in language development..."* [Sims, L., Baker, S., & Clark, M. *The Standardized Visual Communication and Sign Language Checklist for Signing Children*. Sign Language Studies, Volume 14, Number 1, Fall 2013, pp.101-124].



#### Jackie Katter, Speech-Language Pathologist

The Center is thrilled to add speech-language pathologist **Jacqueline D. Hall-Katter** to the Assessment Team as a full-time employee. Jackie has been contracting part-time with the Center since it opened in 2013, so she was able to hit the ground running. Jackie graduated from Purdue University with her Masters of Science Degree in 1992. She began her career working in hospitals and nursing facilities for ages ranging from infants to adults. Jackie honed her specialty to school age students, particularly those with multiple disabilities and executive function challenges.

Jackie is a mother of four; two of her children are deaf, resulting in her additional specialization as a speech-language pathologist who works with deaf and hard of hearing children. She began working at the Indiana School for the Deaf in 1997 providing speech language therapy and assessments. Jackie worked there until fall of 2016 and is bilingual, communicating fluently in American Sign Language. She is excited to join the Center's team full time and to bring her parenting experience as well to assessments and interactions with families every day at the Center. Jackie is unique due to her broad background in many areas of expertise over her 25-year career including: bilingual ability, deaf and hard of hearing, executive function, language, assessment, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).



# FAMILY & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## The Value of Parent-to-Parent Support

Sandi Lerman, Family and Community Education Liaison

When a family first learns that their child is deaf or has a hearing loss, they begin a lifelong journey of discovery and education that involves multiple specialized professionals and service providers. Another valuable connection is to meet and learn from experienced parents who have already been on the same journey. Parents know firsthand what it's like to raise a deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) child and have a unique and important perspective to provide.

Parent-to-parent support is valuable at all ages and stages, from identification to school exit. The Joint Commission for Infant Hearing Position Statement, 2013 update, emphasizes the importance of parent-to-parent support: "There is a sense of an equitable relationship between the experienced parent and the referred parent that cannot be duplicated through other dynamics" (Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, 2013; Moeller, Carr, Seaver, Stredler-Brown, & Holzinger, 2013). Parents who feel supported are empowered to address their children's needs, and parent-to-parent support provides them with skills to help their children in goal-setting, speech and language development, as well as participation in school and in the community (Henderson, Johnson, & Moodie, 2014).

National organizations providing parent-to-parent support for DHH children include Hands & Voices, the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the American Society for Deaf Children. Facebook also offers a variety of parent support groups for general parenting advice and advice specific to special needs and language/communication choices.

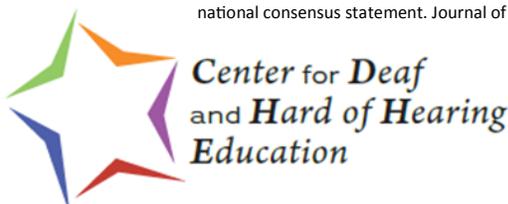
The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education provides parent-to-parent support in three ways:

1. The Center partners with **Indiana Hands & Voices Guide by Your Side program**, which provides parent-to-parent support and information for families of newly identified DHH children by providing families with regional and specialized Parent Guides. Contact: **Lisa Condes** [LCondes@isdh.in.gov](mailto:LCondes@isdh.in.gov); 317-233-7686
2. The Center's **Family and Community Education Liaison** is the parent of a deaf child and provides statewide support and information for families with deaf and hard of hearing children ages birth to age 21. Contact: **Sandi Lerman** [SLerman@isdh.in.gov](mailto:SLerman@isdh.in.gov); 317-232-2826
3. The Center collaborates with and makes referrals to **other agencies and organizations** providing parent-to-parent support for special needs children such as **ASK (About Special Kids)**, **Family Voices**, and **IN\*Source**.

Feel free to contact Sandi Lerman for more information about these and other resources for families.

Joint Committee on Infant Hearing. (2013). Supplement to the JCIH 2007 position statement: principles and guidelines for early intervention after confirmation that a child is deaf or hard of hearing. *Pediatrics*, 131(4), e1324–49. doi:10.1542/peds.2013-0008

Moeller, M. P., Carr, G., Seaver, L., Stredler-Brown, A., & Holzinger, D. (2013). Best practices in family-centered early intervention for children who are deaf or hard of hearing: an international consensus statement. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 18(4), 429–45. doi:10.1093/deafed/ent034



Center for Deaf  
and Hard of Hearing  
Education



# Family Events and Activities



**Parent & Child PLAYGROUP!**

**PLAY**

**CONNECT**

**LEARN**

Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

Monthly Topics Include:

- \* Outdoor Play \*
- \* Communication Opportunities and Strategies \*
- \* Importance of Play \*
- \* Transition to School Age \*
- \* Toys: Back to the Basics \*
- \* Self-Care for Parents \*
- \* Potty Training \*
- \* All about Reading to Littles \*
- \* Indiana and National Resources \*
- \* Parent & Child Temperament \*
- \* Male Role Models \*
- \* What Comes Before Words? \*
- \* Routines: Why Routines are Important \*
- \* Audiology: People & Vocabulary \*

Come together to meet with other families who are raising a deaf or hard of hearing infant or toddler, ask questions, and, of course, have fun! All family members and friends involved in your child's life are welcome.

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each Month  
(Some exceptions for State Holidays)  
Ages: Birth to 5 years old  
From 10:00 am to 11:30 am  
Raney South, Room 126  
1200 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Indianapolis, IN 46205  
Kjari Newell: [knewell@isdh.in.gov](mailto:knewell@isdh.in.gov) 317-232-0690

\*Please RSVP Monthly.  
If no RSVPs are received by Wednesday before, Playgroup will not meet.



Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

First Friday  
**FOCUS**  
Group

FAMILIES ONLINE FOR COMMUNITY,  
UNDERSTANDING, AND SUPPORT

Every First Friday  
from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. EST  
Find the Link on Facebook:  
[Facebook.com/CDHHE](https://www.facebook.com/CDHHE)

**MOM'S NIGHT INN – NORTH**

Please join us for a night away with pampering and networking.

For mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters and caregivers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

\*Learn about Hands & Voices

\*Meet other Moms of Deaf/Hard of Hearing children from around the state and make lifelong friends

Date: November 11-12, 2017  
Time: 12:00 pm Saturday to 12:00 pm Sunday  
Where: Swan Lake Golf Course & Resort  
Plymouth, Indiana

Visit on our website:  
[www.inhandsandvoices.org](http://www.inhandsandvoices.org)




Hands & Voices  
Guide By Your Side

**Day of the Dead**

Family Event  
October 28th

Check the website for details!

For more information about  
Indiana Hands and Voices  
events for families, visit the website

[www.inhandsandvoices.org](http://www.inhandsandvoices.org)

***Tickets are still available! Sign up TODAY at EventBrite:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/clifford-story-time>***

***The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education***

***presents***



# **Clifford**

**Story Time Event for**

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children  
and their Families**



**Saturday, October 14**

**12:00—1:00 p.m.**

Two storytellers will share a Clifford story in  
Spoken English and American Sign Language\*

**Pictures with CLIFFORD!**

**Sign up for your FREE ticket on EventBrite**

Search for “Clifford Story Time” on EventBrite.com or go to this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/clifford-story-time-at-barnes-noble-tickets-37458502389>

**BARNES & NOBLE**

**The Shops at River Crossing  
8675 River Crossing Blvd  
Indianapolis, IN 46240**

For more information contact:

**Sandi Lerman**

Family and Community Education Liaison  
Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

[slerman@isdh.in.gov](mailto:slerman@isdh.in.gov)

317-232-2826

*\*Other language interpreters available with advance notice of at least one week.*





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